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Citation for published version:

Fowle, F 2014, 'Elegant depravity and irresponsible gaiety': The Murray of Henderland Collection and the Scottish Taste for French Eighteenth-century Art. in G Faroult, M Preti & C Vogtherr (eds), *Delicious Decadence: The Rediscovery of French Eighteenth-Century Painting in the Nineteenth Century*. Ashgate Publishing, Farnham, pp. 59-70. <<http://www.ashgate.com/isbn/9781472449214>>

Link:

[Link to publication record in Edinburgh Research Explorer](#)

Document Version:

Peer reviewed version

Published In:

Delicious Decadence: The Rediscovery of French Eighteenth-Century Painting in the Nineteenth Century

Publisher Rights Statement:

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‘Elegant depravity and irresponsible gaiety’: the Murray of Henderland collection and the Scottish taste for French eighteenth-century art

Frances Fowle

The German art historian G.F. Waagen (1794–1868) visited the Murray of Henderland collection in Edinburgh in 1856. This was his second trip to Scotland and he stayed in Edinburgh with James Gibson Craig, who had invited him to attend a meeting of the Archaeological Society. Waagen recalled, ‘Our mornings were spent in visiting the collections of pictures in the vicinity of this picturesque city, and the evenings in society of the most agreeable kind.’¹

Craig himself was the owner of a striking painting by Boucher which Waagen describes as follows: ‘Portrait of Madame de Pompadour, in a white silk dress, a small book on her lap. She is seated in a garden. Very pretty.’² The description is close to the painting now in the Victoria & Albert Museum, part of the Jones bequest of 1882. The early provenance of this picture is unknown and it would be satisfying to make the connection with Craig’s picture. However, as this essay will reveal, depressingly few good French eighteenth-century paintings were acquired by Scottish collectors.

I am very grateful to Christopher Baker (National Galleries of Scotland), Dr Godfrey Evans (National Museums of Scotland), Katrina Thomson (formerly with the National Trust for Scotland) and Robert Wenley (Glasgow Museums) for their generous assistance with this essay.

¹ G.F. Waagen, *Galleries and Cabinets of Art in Great Britain* (London 1857), p.432.

² *Ibid.*, p. 433.

During his short stay in Edinburgh Waagen visited several important Scottish collections, including that of the Duke of Buccleuch at Dalkeith Palace, the Earl of Wemyss's collection at Gosford House in East Lothian and Lord Elgin's collection at Broomhall. However, apart from Lord Murray's pictures, he noted not one significant example of eighteenth-century French painting. This is not to say that there was no interest in Scotland for French art of this period, but the examples are few and far between. In this essay I want to examine the three or four Scottish collections of the period that did include French eighteenth-century art, in order to create a context for the Murray collection.

A significant collection of eighteenth-century French art was amassed by Hugh Andrew Johnstone Munro of Novar (1797–1864). Munro inherited the family estates at Novar, Ross-shire from his uncle, Sir Hector Munro, who worked for the East India company, and whose two sons both died in unfortunate circumstances – one mauled by a tiger and the other killed by a shark in the Bay of Bengal. Munro began collecting in 1810 when he inherited a painting by Bartolomé Esteban Murillo from his father who had been British consul-general in Madrid. Over time he built up an outstanding collection, including masterpieces such as Raphael's *Madonna dei Candelabri* (Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore), Rembrandt's *Lucretia* (National Gallery of Art, Washington) and Veronese's *Vision of St Helena* (National Gallery, London). He also owned Giulio Romano's *The Holy Family with the Infant St John the Baptist* (National Gallery of Scotland), known as the *Novar Virgin*,³ but he is best known for his collection of works by Turner.⁴

³ Hugh Brigstocke, 'The Rediscovery of a Lost Masterpiece by Giulio Romano', *Burlington Magazine*, 120/907 (1978):.665–6.

Munro formed close friendships with a number of the artists whose work he collected and whom he invited to stay in Scotland and at his house in Grosvenor Square, London.⁵ These included the French marine artist Théodore Gudin and the Hungarian artist Károly Brocky, whom he brought over from Paris to London in 1838 and for whom he was an important patron. However his most important association was with Turner, whom he invited to stay at Novar in 1831 and whom he accompanied on a sketching expedition to Italy in 1836. Turner described Munro as rather a nervous man with a

⁴ On Munro of Novar, see Christopher Baker, 'Turner and Munro of Novar: Friendship, Collecting and Italy' in James Hamilton et al, *Turner & Italy*, exhibition catalogue, Edinburgh, National Gallery Complex, 27 March –7 June 2009 (Edinburgh, 2009), pp. 119–27; Kenneth Garlick, 'Munro, Hugh Andrew Johnstone of Novar (1797–1864), *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004); James Holloway, 'H.A.J. Munro of Novar', *Review of Scottish Culture*, 7 (1991): .9–13; Charles Sebag-Montefiore, 'Munro of Novar, Hugh Andrew Johnstone (1797–1864)' in Evelyn Joll, Martin Butlin and Luke Hermann (eds.), *The Oxford Companion to J.M.W. Turner* (Oxford, 2001), pp.194–5; and Selby Whittingham, 'Munro of Novar, H.A.J.' in J. Turner (ed.), *The Dictionary of Art* (34 vols, London, 1996), vol. 22, pp. 314–5.

⁵ He divided his collection between Novar and his London house at 113 Park Street, Grosvenor Square and later 6 Hamilton Place in Piccadilly. On his collection, see Anonymous, 'Visits to Private Galleries. The Collection of H.A.J. Munro, Esq., of Novar', *The Art Union, Monthly Journal of the Fine Arts and the Arts, Decorative, Ornamental*, 9 (1947): 253–5; Anonymous, 'Visits to Private Galleries of the British School. The Collection of Hugh. Munro, Esq., Hamilton Place, Piccadilly', *The Art Journal*, 3 (1857): 133–5; William E. Frost and Henry Reeve, *A Complete Catalogue of the Paintings, Watercolour Drawings and Prints in the Collection of the late Hugh Andrew Johnstone Munro, Esq., of Novar, at the time of his death deposited in his house, No 6 Hamilton Place, London, with some additional paintings at Novar* (London, 1865).

stammer, but whose shyness had been improved by exposure to ‘French manners’.⁶

Unusually for a Scottish collector of this period Munro had a large collection of French paintings, including Claude’s late *Landscape with St Philip Baptising the Eunuch*, 1678 (National Museums of Wales), and a number of eighteenth-century pictures. We know that he visited France in 1826 and 1836 and he may well have bought at least some of his pictures in Paris. It was also possible to buy French eighteenth-century pictures in London through Simon Jacques Rochard (1788–1872).⁷

Munro was what one might describe as landed gentry, but he was also an amateur artist and according to Waagen he painted in the style of Jean-Baptiste Greuze.⁸ This may explain why the sale of his collection in 1878 included fourteen works attributed to this artist, almost all images of young girls.⁹ Since most have generic titles such as ‘Girl’s

⁶ *Collected Correspondence of J.M.W. Turner*, ed. John Gage (Oxford, 1980), pp.103, 272–3, quoted in Selby Whittingham, ‘Watteaus and “Watteaus” in Britain’, in François Moureau and M.M. Grasselli (eds), *Antoine Watteau (1684–1721), le peintre, son temps et sa légende* (Paris and Geneva, 1987) p. 275.

⁷ Whittingham, ‘Watteau and “Watteaus” in Britain’, p. 276. Rochard sold eighteenth-century French pictures in London for 30 years, up until 1846.

⁸ Waagen, *Treasures of Art in Great Britain* (3 vols, London, 1854), vol. 2, p.141.

⁹ These were: (523) Girl Seated on a Couch – Left Arm resting on Cushion; open Book in Right Hand, on Table; Letter, Book, and Pearls on ditto. 32in high by 25 ½ wide; (524) Girl’s Head – Blue-green Dress; rich Brown Hair. 13 ½ in high by 12 wide; (525) Boy’s Head – Large Black Hat. 18 in high by 14 wide; (526) Girl’s Head – Small Brown Cap; round Full Face; Dark Neckerchief. 15in high by 12 wide; (527) Girl’s Head – Looking down; White Dress; White Ribbon in Hair. 18 ½ in high by 14 ½ wide; (528) Girl’s Head – Chin raised; Sleeping Eyes; bare Shoulder; Blue Drapery right Shoulder. 17 ½ in high by 14 ½ wide; (529) Girl’s Head – White Cap; Black Neck Ribbon, with Cross; White Neckerchief. 17 ½ in high by 14 ½ in wide; (530) Young Girl’s Head – Cap, Blue and Pink Ribbons; Forehead in Shadow. 14 ½ in high

Head' or 'Child's Head' they are difficult to identify with any certainty. One work (no.531), described in the catalogue as a 'Fine Specimen' relates closely to the painting now in a private collection in London, *Girl Playing with a Dog*. Munro's version is described as 'Girl with Spaniel Dog in Arms; White Dress and Cap; Black Scarf over Arm'. The addition of the black scarf suggests that this might be one of the one of the versions now in Milan and Toulon.¹⁰

According to Waagen, Munro possessed 'many pictures of unequal value' and a number of works included in the 1878 sale of his collection were of doubtful attribution.¹¹ (This unfortunately appears to be the case with the large majority of eighteenth-century French pictures coming into Scotland.) The 1878 sale included four

by 11 wide; (531) (Fine Specimen) Girl with Spaniel Dog in Arms – White Dress and Cap; Black Scarf over Arm. 18 in high by 15 wide; (532) Child's Head – Looking over Right Shoulder; light Purple-brown Dress. 18 in high by 15 wide; (533) (A Sketch) Interior of a Cottage – Grandpapa and Mamma feeding Child; Father and Mother standing behind; Dog foreground; Cradle behind. 16in high by 12 ½ in wide. The attribution of the following three lots is questioned in the catalogue: (534) Lady Writing a Letter on Green-Covered Table – 6 ½ in high by 4 ½ in wide; (535) Female Head in Profile – Looking to Left Shoulder; Blue and White Drapery. 17 in high by 14 wide. Arched-top Corners; (536) (Whole length, life size) 'Madame Elizabeth, Sister to Louis XVI' – 87 in high by 56 wide.

¹⁰ These are the works in the Civico Museo d'Arte Antica, Castello Sforzesco, Milan and the Musée d'Art et d'Histoire, Toulon. There are also copies of this subject in Berlin, Dijon and Rouen and numerous copies after engravings.

¹¹ Waagen, *Works of Art and Artists in England* (3 vols, London, 1838), vol. 2, p. 402 (letter XXII, 18 August 1835).

Bouchers and twelve lots by or attributed to Watteau.¹² Several of the Watteaus have since been reattributed, but seven were described in an earlier catalogue of Munro's collection as 'first class'.¹³ One, *Le Printemps*, came from the Crozat collection and fetched £651.¹⁴ It was one of a set of four ceiling paintings representing the seasons, but was sadly destroyed by fire in May 1966. Another work, Watteau's *Les deux petites marquises* (untraced) fetched £2,625, a record price for the period. This was an early work, depicting 'two little girls in wigs and pompons of feathers and flowers'.¹⁵ Munro lent the picture to the British Institution exhibition of 1839, together with a *Fête Champêtre*, when it was described by *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* as 'a very singular picture'.¹⁶ Waagen later deemed it 'a picture of the utmost attraction for the naïveté and truth of conception, and the delicate and transparent colouring.'¹⁷ Munro also rated this picture highly, for it was the only one of his Watteaus to hang in the main drawing room of his London house.

Waagen visited Munro's collection in London, rather than Morayshire, and it was not until 1852 that he made his first tour of Scotland. He travelled to Edinburgh initially

¹² The Bouchers were: (203) Two Females; (214) Girl Sleeping; (514) The Graces; and (from Novar) A Lady with a Mask in her Hand.

¹³ Frost and Reeve.

¹⁴ Michael Levey, 'A Watteau Rediscovered: "Le Printemps" for Crozat', *Burlington Magazine*, 106/731 (1964) : 53–8. On Watteau in British nineteenth-century collections, see Whittingham, 'Watteaus and "Watteaus"', pp. 269–77.

¹⁵ *The Times*, 3 June 1878, p. 8, quoted in Whittingham, 'Watteaus and "Watteaus"', p. 276. Whittingham's essay examines this painting and its reception in considerable detail.

¹⁶ *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 46 (1839), quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 276.

¹⁷ Waagen, *Treasures of Art in Great Britain*, vol. 2, p.136.

and visited the Torrie collection, which had recently been bequeathed to the University of Edinburgh. Sir James Erskine of Torrie was the younger son of Sir William Erskine, an army man, who commanded the 15th Light Dragoons. Sir James succeeded his brother William, 2nd baronet Erskine of Torrie, who died in 1813 from pleurisy.

Sir James served in the army with the Duke of Wellington and was in Paris at the fall of Napoleon. He was described by contemporaries as ‘an eminent art critic and patron’ and he bought numerous paintings and furniture while he was abroad, not only in Paris but in Berlin and Hamburg.¹⁸ The collection originally hung at Torry House, a gothic revival building, near Culross in Fife. It included a large number of important Dutch Old Masters and it is notable that the only French picture of any significance noted by Waagen was Greuze’s *Interior of a Cottage* (University of Edinburgh). It shows a poor family living in a ramshackle cottage, struggling to make ends meet and with no obvious means of support, since the father is conspicuously absent. This is just the kind of subject-matter that one would expect to appeal to the Presbyterian Scots and Waagen praised it for its ‘delicate but subdued tones.’¹⁹

The main purpose of Waagen’s first trip to Scotland was to see the collection at Hamilton Palace, the seat of the Dukes of Hamilton.²⁰ Like many Scottish collections of

¹⁸ On the Torrie Collection, see *The Torrie Collection, an exhibition to mark the quarter-centenary of the University of Edinburgh*, exhibition catalogue, Edinburgh, Talbot Rice Art Centre, the University of Edinburgh, 1 July – 13 August 1983 (Edinburgh, 1983).

¹⁹ Waagen, *Treasures of Art in Great Britain*, vol. 2, p. 272.

²⁰ Today only a relatively small part of the original collection survives in the ducal apartments at Holyroodhouse, at Lennoxlove near Haddington and at Brodick Castle on the Isle of Arran.

this period the Hamilton Palace collection was strongest in Italian and Flemish Old Masters. For, although the palace itself was lavishly equipped with outstanding examples of eighteenth-century French furniture, mostly collected by Alexander, the 10th Duke (1767-1852), there was surprisingly little in the way of French paintings of the same period.²¹ The 10th Duke was evidently happy to buy Louis XV or Louis XVI furniture, but was disinclined to buy images connected with French royalty, perhaps because of their uncomfortable associations.

An exception was the portrait by Louis Tocqué of the *Marquis de Marigny* (1727–1781), *Directeur général des Bâtiments du Roi* (Private Collection).²² Marigny is shown in official costume, wearing the insignia of the Orde du Saint Esprit and carrying the plans for the Ecole Militaire project in Paris. The portrait is identical to the version at Versailles and was probably commissioned from Tocqué after Marigny offered the original portrait to the Academy in March 1756. The 10th Duke of Hamilton almost

²¹ On the collection of French artefacts at Hamilton Palace, see *French Connections: Scotland and the Arts of France*, exhibition catalogue, Royal Scottish Museum, 1985–6 (Edinburgh, 1985); and Godfrey Evans, ‘The 11th Duke and Duchess of Hamilton and France’, *Journal of the Scottish Society for Art History*, 14 (2009): 7–17. On the 10th Duke of Hamilton’s Collection of Italian Old Masters, see Godfrey Evans, ‘The Hamilton Collection and the 10th Duke of Hamilton’, *Journal of the Scottish Society for Art History*, 8 (2003): 53–72. I am extremely grateful to Godfrey Evans for generously sharing his extensive knowledge of the Hamilton collections.

²² There was also an unidentified painting by Dampierre of ‘A Racecourse in France with portraits of the Royal Family’, which was included in the 1919 sale. *Catalogue of Family Portraits, Works by Old Masters and Modern Pictures, the property of the Trustees of his Grace the Late Duke of Hamilton*, Christie, Manson & Woods, London, 6 November 1919, lot 10.

certainly acquired the painting following the sale of Marigny's seat, the Château de Ménars, in 1811.²³

By the time Waagen visited Hamilton Palace the 10th Duke had died and he was greeted by the Duchess Susan, nee Beckford (d.1859). Waagen described her as 'a lady of the most refined and easy manners' whose 'conversation evinced the highest cultivation of the mind.'²⁴ Susan Euphemia Beckford was the daughter of William Beckford of Fonthill, who was a close friend of the 10th Duke and shared his passion for collecting. From her father she inherited an important collection, much of which was dispersed at the Hamilton Palace sales, but some of which is still at Brodick Castle. It included two paintings on copper by Antoine Watteau, *The Enchanter* (Plate 1) and *The Adventuress* (Plate 2), variations on two works now in the Musée des Beaux-Arts at Troyes.²⁵ At the time of Beckford's death in 1844 they were in the Small Library of his house at Lansdown Crescent, catalogued as 'A pair - Garden Scenes with Figures in Conversation [by] Watteau'.²⁶ Before Beckford acquired them, sometime after 1826, they were in the collection of the great connoisseur and admirer of Watteau, Dominique

²³ The provenance of this painting is listed in *Tableaux et dessins anciens et du XIXe siècle*, Sotheby's, Paris, 20 October 2005, lot.23, p. 30. See also Alden R. Gordon, *Documents for the History of Collecting: French Inventorie 1. The Houses and Collections of the Marquis de Marigny*, ed. Carolyne Aycaguer-Ron (Los Angeles, 2003), p. 317, inv.1043.

²⁴ Waagen, *Treasures of Art in Great Britain*, vol. 3, p. 295.

²⁵ Pierre Rosenberg has demonstrated convincingly that the Brodick pictures post-date the Troyes paintings. See Pierre Rosenberg, 'Répétitions et répliques dans l'oeuvre de Watteau' in Moureau and Grasselli (eds), pp. 103–10.

²⁶ See the 1844 Beckford inventory, Bodleian Library, MS. Beckford c. 58, p.12.

Vivant Denon (1747–1825). According to Denon, they had previously belonged to Charles-François Sylvestre (1667–1738), who was drawing master to the royal children from 1694 and may have known Watteau personally.²⁷

The Brodick pictures depict the same two scenes, which wittily complement each other. The theme that links the two might be described as unsuccessful seduction. In one, the Adventuress, hand on hip and leaning on a long cane, is listening attentively to a male guitar player, who is seated to the left of the composition with two other figures. He ignores her pointedly and turns towards us. In its pendant the male Enchanter attempts to woo, with his guitar playing, a young girl who is seated to the right of the painting. She is accompanied by two older chaperones and, again, looks out in our direction.

In addition to the two Watteaus, Beckford owned a work attributed to Jean-Honoré Fragonard, described as follows: ‘A Lady in a White Satin Dress - Her Attendant is chastising her Pet Dog’.²⁸ Regretfully, little is known about this painting, except that it hung in the Back Drawing Room of Lansdown Crescent. An annotation against the entry in the 1844 Beckford inventory indicates that it was then taken to London and was in the

²⁷ Margaret Morgan Grasselli and Pierre Rosenberg, *Watteau 1684–1721*, exhibition catalogue, Washington, DC, National Gallery of Art, 17 June – 23 September 1984; Paris, Galeries nationales du Grand Palais, 23 October 1984 – 28 January 1985; Berlin, Schloss Charlottenburg, 22 February – 26 May 1985 (Paris, 1984), p.287.

²⁸ 1844 Beckford inventory, Bodleian Library, MS. Beckford c. 58, p. 15

10th Duke's house in Portman Square, in February 1851.²⁹ Another, rather less interesting painting attributed to Fragonard, presumably also from the Beckford collection, is at Brodick Castle and depicts a young girl in a brown dress.

Apart from the works now at Brodick, the Hamilton collection included two paintings by J.B. Pater entitled *The Bath* and the *Toilet*³⁰ and Chardin's *Portrait of an Unknown Artist* (Wildenstein 371), dated 1775, and catalogued as 'Portrait of the Artist, in brown dress, holding a crayon and sketch-book'.³¹ This work is not referred to by Waagen, perhaps because he felt it was uninteresting, or incorrectly attributed; but it is

²⁹ 'A Lady in a white Satin Dress, her attendant is chastising her pet dog [by] Fragonard [sic]' (Hamilton Archive, M12/51/1, list of works sent from Bath at Portman Square in February 1851, p.6). The painting was subsequently taken to the 11th Duke of Hamilton's house in Arlington Street, where it hung in the Yellow Drawing Room. This was recorded after his death in 1863: 'A Lady in a White Satin Dress - Her Attendant is chastising her pet dog [by] Fragonard' (Hamilton Archive, M4/78, inventory of Arlington Street 1864, p.136). Information from Godfrey Evans.

³⁰ *Catalogue of Family Portraits, Works by Old Masters and Modern Pictures, the property of the Trustees of his Grace the Late Duke of Hamilton*, Christie, Manson & Woods, London, 6 November 1919, lot 39 The Bath – An interior of an apartment, with a lady leaving her bath, with four attendants standing round; two other maids by a toilet-table near a window 13 ½ by 17 ½ in; lot 40 The Toilet – A lady seated at her dressing-table, with maids arranging her toilet; another lady, seated, reading at the fireside 13 ½ x 17 ½ in.

³¹ *Catalogue of Family Portraits, Works by Old Masters and Modern Pictures, the property of the Trustees of his Grace the Late Duke of Hamilton*, Christie, Manson & Woods, London, 6 November 1919, lot 9, 'J.B. Chardin, Portrait of the Artist, in brown dress, holding a crayon and sketch-book[.] 23½ in. by 19½ in.' This portrait is reproduced in Georges Wildenstein, *J.B.S. Chardin* (Zurich, 1963), no. 371, fig. 170, pp. 217–8.

also possible that it was acquired some time after Waagen's visit, by the 11th Duke of Hamilton.³²

Before visiting Hamilton Palace, Waagen called in at Mugdock Castle near Milngavie, the home of Archibald McLellan (1797–1854). Waagen noted that although 'The taste for collecting has at present but little obtained among the rich merchants and manufacturers of Glasgow ... Mr Archibald McLellan, forms an honourable exception.'³³ Glasgow in the 1850s was well on its way to becoming second city of the Empire and McLellan was part of a rising generation of mercantile collectors who benefited from the city's economic expansion.

McLellan was a partner in his father's prosperous coach-building business. He was also a classical scholar, a brilliant debater and an accomplished musician. Waagen described him as 'a most ardent lover of the arts' and McLellan was not only an important art collector, but was instrumental in promoting the establishment of a Glasgow Institute of the Fine Arts, which was founded after his death.³⁴ He loved his

³² The 11th Duke's taste was more for nineteenth-century French paintings and he owned works attributed to Eugène Delacroix, Paul Delaroche and Jean-Leon Gérôme. All three are listed – but not as consecutive entries – in the Boudoir at Arlington Street in 1864: 'Marie Stuart, the day before her Execution [by] Paul de Laroche; Lion & Leopard [by] Eugene Delacroix; Crossing the Dessert in Africa [by] Gerome', Hamilton Archive, M4/78, pp. 48–9. The latter two were in the 1919 sale, on 7 November, as lots 126 and 134. See also lots 95, 100, 166, 168 and 171. I am grateful to Godfrey Evans for this information. For further details of the 11th Duke's collection of French art, see Evans, 'The 11th Duke and Duchess of Hamilton and France'.

³³ Waagen, *Treasures of Art in Great Britain*, vol. 3, p. 286.

³⁴ On Archibald McLellan see Elspeth Gallie, 'Archibald McLellan', *The Scottish Art Review*, 5 (1954), pp. 7–12. See also Robert Wenley, 'The Glasgow Dilettanti Society Exhibition of 1843: Collecting Old Master

native city and at his death in 1854 he bequeathed his entire collection of 510 pictures, his library and his sculptures to Glasgow. This formed the nucleus of what is now the Kelvingrove art gallery.

The larger part of McLellan's collection was devoted to Dutch and Flemish paintings of the seventeenth century but he also owned important Italian Old Masters including Giorgione's *The Adulteress brought before Christ* (Glasgow Museums) and some fine seventeenth-century French paintings, such as *The Four Seasons* by Simon Vouet.³⁵ His collection of eighteenth-century French paintings was comparatively small, but is nevertheless worthy of mention.

The only eighteenth-century French picture in McLellan's collection that Waagen commented on during his visit to Mugdock Castle was almost certainly the picture now known as *Arrival at the Island of Cythera*, and tentatively attributed to Pierre-Antoine Quillard. It came into the collection as the *Pic-nic Party* by Pater, but McLellan acquired it as by Lancret. Waagen describes the subject only superficially as 'a large party in a

Paintings in Mid-nineteenth Century Glasgow', *Journal of the Scottish Society for Art History*, 14 (2009). I am very grateful to Robert Wenley for sharing information on the McLellan and Euing bequests.

³⁵ The McLellan bequest to Glasgow was catalogued in 1855 and included only 43 French pictures. See *The McLellan Gallery, Catalogue of Pictures Bequeathed to the People of Glasgow by the Late Archibald McLellan*, 1855. See also 'The Maclellan [sic] Gallery, Glasgow', *The Art Journal* (1855): 312–14; Maureen P. Park, 'The McLellan Bequest', *The Scottish Art Review*, 17 (1991): 22–5; Vivien Hamilton, 'Italian Old Masters in Glasgow: Resources for Research', *Journal of the Scottish Society for Art History*, 8 (2003): 87–92; Wenley, 'The Glasgow Dilettanti Society Exhibition of 1843'.

landscape’ and reattributes it to Pater, based on the ‘skilful composition ... warm and clear colouring and ... very careful execution.’³⁶

Waagen revisited the McLellan collection on his second trip to Glasgow in 1856, two years after McLellan’s death, by which date the pictures were housed in a special gallery in Glasgow’s Sauchiehall Street. On this occasion he noted two works by Boucher among the small collection of French paintings: a ‘Leda and the Swan’ which he dismisses as ‘Feeble and disagreeable in sentiment, though skilfully modelled in a silvery tone’ and ‘a boy teaching a girl how to play the flute’ which he describes as ‘very pretty’.³⁷ Neither of these pictures remains in the collection at Glasgow, and it is almost certain that both were optimistically attributed to Boucher. Some of McLellan’s pictures were disposed of in a sale on 8 April 1882, others suffered a more exotic fate and were sent to Japan in 1879 as part of an official exchange between the City of Glasgow and the Japanese government. It appears that Glasgow, who received some important Japanese lacquerware, had the decidedly better part of the bargain, since the majority of the twenty-four works sent to Tokyo were of poor quality. They included a weak version of Boucher’s *Shepherd Piping to a Shepherdess* in the Wallace Collection,³⁸ catalogued in 1855 as ‘School of Boucher’ and in 1879 as *A Pastoral Music Lesson* by Lancret (597).³⁹

³⁶ Waagen, *Treasures of Art in Great Britain*, p. 287.

³⁷ Waagen, *Galleries and Cabinets of Art in Great Britain*, p. 462.

³⁸ John Ingamells, *The Wallace Collection: Catalogue of Pictures* (4 vols, London, 1985–9), vol. 3, p. 33 (P399). The Glasgow painting is oil on canvas, 79.4 x 112 cm; ref. NMT no.718.

³⁹ *Pastoral Subject* by School of Boucher (no. 26 in 1855).

The McLellan bequest to Glasgow was discussed in some detail in an article published in 1855 in *The Art Journal*.⁴⁰ Among the French eighteenth-century pictures the critic drew attention to four further works, three of which have since disappeared from the collection. These were a 'Head of a Child' by Greuze and what the *Art Journal* describes as three 'excellent specimens' by Antoine Watteau - *The Swing*, *Winter Recreations* and *A Minuet*. The Greuze, a small work on panel, was esteemed to be 'agreeable in design, colour and expression'. However, like many works in McLellan's collection, this was an optimistic attribution and the painting has now been demoted to 'style of Fragonard'. The three pictures by Watteau are no longer in the Glasgow collection but we can be almost certain that they too were optimistically attributed.⁴¹ *The Swing* was sent to Japan and we know from a black-and-white reproduction, now in the National Museum in Tokyo that this was in fact another pastiche of Lancret or Pater.⁴²

Indeed, the only French eighteenth-century painting in the McLellan bequest that can be firmly attributed is *Bacchantes and Satyrs* by Charles-Joseph Natoire, previously attributed to Fragonard.⁴³ However, even if McLellan did not possess a good eye, it is important to remember that he acquired these works under the impression that they were eighteenth-century French paintings. He relied for his decisions on his dealers and he was

⁴⁰ 'The Maclellan [sic] Gallery, Glasgow', 312–4.

⁴¹ These pictures were described as 'successfully illustrating the master's system of design and composition, produced in a brilliant and harmonious arrangement of tint, and in the most spirited style of pencilling', *Ibid.*, p. 313.

⁴² This work is oil on canvas, 52.7 x 63.8 cm; ref. NMT no.703

⁴³ The attribution to Natoire was first made by Anita Brookner and is based on a related drawing in the Albertina Museum.

also not the only Glasgow collector to make such errors of judgement. The collection at Glasgow's Kelvingrove art gallery includes several works originally attributed to Pater, Greuze, Boucher and Fragonard and now 'demoted', revealing just how few works of significance were absorbed into Scottish collections on the west coast of Scotland.

William Euing (1788–1874), an insurance underwriter, owned pictures attributed to Watteau, Greuze and Lancret, all now discovered to be copies. And Robert Hutchison (c.1790/1–1862), a Glasgow muslin manufacturer had a large art collection, including six works attributed to Greuze, five Watteaus and two Bouchers. Nevertheless the quality of these works was generally poor and the prevailing taste was for Italian and, more particularly Dutch Old Masters.

Eighteenth Century French paintings were a comparatively insignificant feature of these mercantile collections, where, until the early 1870s, the prevailing taste was for Italian and especially Dutch Old Masters. Where French art was concerned it was Watteau and Greuze who were most admired by Scottish collectors such as Munro, Murray and McLellan. Boucher and Fragonard were perhaps considered too frivolous and even immoral for the Presbyterian Scots. One is reminded of General Wolseley, hero of the Crimea, who was apparently 'shocked' by the nudes by Boucher at Hertford House and this may well have been the typical reaction north of the border. Scottish collectors certainly avoided any subject that even remotely hinted at eroticism and many considered Rococo art to be lacking in seriousness. When the Murray of Henderland bequest went on show at the National Gallery of Scotland in 1861 the pictures were dismissed as 'fashionable but flimsy' by the local press.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ *The Scotsman*, 2 December 1861, p. 2.

As the century progressed the taste in Scotland for this style of painting declined and the next generation of mercantile collectors preferred the Realism of Dutch and French nineteenth century art to what Sir James Caw referred to as the ‘elegant depravity and irresponsible ... gaiety’ of the Rococo period. The very few collectors who did acquire eighteenth century works generally preferred Chardin to Boucher and Fragonard. An example is the Glasgow shipowner William Burrell, who in fact did not buy his Chardins until the early 20th Century.

Perhaps unaccountably, as the taste in Scotland for eighteenth-century French art declined, a large number of collectors, including Burrell, developed a passion for the *fête champêtres* of Adolphe Monticelli. In 1886 eight works by Monticelli were shown at the Edinburgh International Exhibition and were highly praised by the art critic W.E. Henley: ‘... his art is purely sensuous,’ he wrote, ‘His fairy meadows and enchanted gardens are so to speak “that sweet word Mesopotamia” in two dimensions; their parallel in literature is the verse that one reads for the sound’s sake only ... If this be painting, then is Monticelli’s the greatest of the century.’⁴⁵

How could a group of important eighteenth century pictures – including Watteau’s great *Fêtes Vénitiennes* (National Gallery of Scotland) – be described by Scottish critics in 1861 as ‘fashionable but flimsy’ while Monticelli – often known as the nineteenth-century Watteau – was praised as the greatest artist of the century? Equally, how could McLellan’s collection of French pictures be admired, even by connoisseurs

⁴⁵ W.E. Henley, *Memorial Catalogue of the French and Dutch Loan Collection*, Edinburgh International Exhibition 1886 (Edinburgh, 1888), p.61.

such as Waagen, when, as we have seen, it included a group of second-rate works? The truth is that very few eighteenth century works of any significance were shown in Scotland. The best collection, apart from Murray's was that of Munro of Novar, who hung the majority of his French pictures in London, rather than Scotland, and even the Watteaus at Brodick came into the collection through Beckford, an English collector. Scottish mercantile collectors such as McLellan and Euing were more interested Italian and especially Dutch Old Masters than in French art and their knowledge and appreciation of French eighteenth-century painting was extremely poor. The Murray of Henderland collection was unique, therefore, both in terms of its quality and as an *unusual* reflection of Scottish nineteenth-century taste.

Captions

Plate 1 Antoine Watteau, *The Enchanter*, 26 x 19 cm, oil on copper, National Trust for Scotland (Brodick Castle).

Plate 2 Antoine Watteau, *The Adventuress*, 26 x 19 cm, oil on copper, National Trust for Scotland (Brodick Castle).